

the debates and let's talk and let's vote and come to a result, and let's begin to lower gasoline prices. From the day the United States of America says to the world that we are going to find more American oil and we are going to use less oil, the expected price of oil and gas will begin to go down, and so will today's price of gas and oil go down.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate has passed legislation which will help our troubled housing market. This bill will reform the oversight of the government-sponsored enterprises—Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan Banks—and also provided much needed relief for communities and homeowners combating foreclosures.

The first piece of this large housing bill is the Federal Housing Finance Regulatory Reform Act. This legislation will modernize the regulation of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks and expands their housing mission. By creating one regulator for the GSEs, it will make it easier for them to respond to the housing market and continue to create affordable housing opportunities for Americans across the country.

The bill also includes key provisions which will help homeowners and communities combat foreclosures. Foreclosed properties drive down the property value of surrounding homes, and communities are losing tax revenue, which will impact public services. Communities need the ability to take excess homes and make them livable again in order to recover lost revenue. The \$4 billion in CDBG funding included in this bill will allow for States and local municipalities to rehabilitate foreclosed properties and then get them back onto the market for homeowners to purchase or to be made into affordable rental housing. This money is vital to the economic recovery of communities that have been devastated by foreclosure.

Additionally, the bill has funding for housing counselors to help homeowners avoid foreclosure. Housing counselors

will be able to reach troubled homeowners and find viable and affordable solutions in order to keep them in their homes. One of the most creative provisions to help at risk homeowners is the Hope for Homeownership Program in FHA. This program will allow homeowners who are behind on their mortgage payments to refinance into a fixed-rate FHA insured mortgage and ultimately stay in their homes. The quicker these provisions are signed into law, the quicker families and communities can respond to their housing needs.

I am very pleased that the amendment which myself, Senators COLLINS, LINCOLN, and MIKULSKI offered was agreed to and incorporated into the bill. There are many problems that are a result of the collapsing housing market, and the emergence of financial scam artists is one of them. The amendment will better protect homeowners from scam artists trying to steal the equity out of their homes.

The passage of this housing bill is the first step to help our country from the collapse of the housing market. I hope that the House will act quickly and Congress can produce a comprehensive piece of legislation which the President will sign.

FISA ADMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for July 9, 2008, inadvertently omitted my written statement for the RECORD. The text is as follows:

Mr. President, I believe that we must pass a new FISA bill that enables our intelligence community to get the information it needs to stop terrorist plots while also protecting our civil liberties, by requiring a court order before any American is targeted for eavesdropping.

But I don't believe in blanket immunity for the phone companies. That's why, in the Intelligence Committee, I offered language to deny immunity to the telecommunications companies for their alleged participation in the President's warrantless wiretapping program. But that amendment failed—and failed miserably.

During floor consideration of the FISA bill, Senator FEINSTEIN and I offered a compromise amendment that would have required the FISA court to review the actions of telecommunications companies who participated in the President's warrantless wiretapping program. But it failed too.

Now I am backing an amendment by Senator BINGAMAN that would at least delay immunity until the inspectors general of the U.S. Government complete their investigation of the President's warrantless wiretapping program. Upon completion of the report, the Senate will have ninety days to act before immunity is granted to the telecommunications companies. This will allow us time to change some minds if real wrongdoing is found.

Overall, I believe this legislation significantly improves civil liberties pro-

tections for Americans while enabling our intelligence community to listen in on terrorists. This is an important step forward and I will support this legislation.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST ESTELLE "LEE" TURNER

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to SPC Estelle "Lee" Turner and his heroic service to our country. As a member of the Army's Echo Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division based in Fort Campbell, KY, SPC Turner was serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. On July 2, 2008, he died in a hospital in Bethesda, MD after being mortally wounded by an IED in Afghanistan.

Lee had already served his country for 6 years in the Army two decades earlier, having finished his military service in 1989. Yet this wasn't enough. Even though he had gone above and beyond, Lee still had the drive to be a hero. After moving to Sioux Falls in 2004, he reenlisted in the Army at the age of 39, after the Army had raised its age limit. He looked forward to being deployed to Afghanistan, his first tour in the war on terror. His wife recalls, "He never seemed worried about it, this is something he believed in. He thought it was right."

Raised in a military family, patriotism was instilled in his heart from a young age. Lee's father served in the Navy for 18 years, and his grandfather was an Army soldier who served in World War II. His younger brother John is in the Army, and his wife is an Army reservist. Lee's awards and decorations include the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Combat Action Badge, and the Purple Heart. Lee enjoyed racing and fixing cars, and playing guitar. He had a fierce devotion to his family, and he will be deeply missed by those who survive him: his wife Leah, his daughter Lyda, his siblings, John and "Gucci", and his mother Gloria.

Specialist Turner gave his all for his soldiers and his country. Our Nation owes him a debt of gratitude, and the best way to honor his life is to emulate his commitment to our country. Mr. President, I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Specialist Turner. He will be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering over 1,000, are heartbreaking and

touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through energy_prices@crapo.senate.gov to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Like many other single parents out there, we have to commute to work for better-paying jobs and cannot take public transportation because they won't stop at daycare and the store on the way home from work. So, yes, like every family, whether single or not, you have to drive and cannot ride your bike, but give me a break. And tell me why the airlines are now charging a \$75 escort fee for your child under 12 flying alone (it was \$30 last year), and this is to walk them from the counter to the plane. Tell me how much gas does that use? And their reason for increased cost is the fuel prices. So that is \$150 round trip to walk from the counter to the plane on top of the airline charge. What is going to be the next excuse—charging to use the restroom during the flight?

I seriously believe this is going to extremely out of hand before it gets any better. And is anyone going to do anything about all of this? I do not think so!!!

Thank you,

TRACY, Star.

Dear Senator Crapo, When gas hit \$2 a gallon, my husband and I agreed that neither of us expected the price to ever go below \$2 and that the price would continue to increase because of increased demand from China and India and the Iraq war. In 2006, we traded in a mid-80s Saturn and bought a Toyota Prius because of its gas mileage. As the price of gas continued to increase, my husband bought a scooter to commute to work whenever the weather is dry. The scooter gets 90+ miles to the gallon. Being a stay-at-home mom for a while with our daughter, I consolidate errands into a single trip whenever I can and handle as many things as I can over the telephone. Gas is now over \$4 a gallon (. . . diesel is almost \$5!), but everyday I still see huge shiny pickup trucks and SUVs driven by solo drivers commuting to work.

Would I like gas to be cheaper? Sure, but it is not reasonable to expect that it is going to happen any time soon. Domestic oil reserves cannot be developed quickly enough for us to seriously depend on that strategy. We must reduce demand and become more efficient.

Our grandparents and parents supported the war effort by reducing their personal consumption of oil, metal, clothing and food (among other items). Why do our leaders (you!) insist that citizens are unable to rise to the occasion and change our consumption?

Do I support destroying the Alaskan wilderness so my fellow Idahoans can commute in SUV's? No!

Do I support fighting wars over oil so we can go water skiing and speed boating at Lucky Peak? No!

Do I support subsidizing and coddling the American car industry which has stubbornly refused to offer fuel efficient cars? No!

If Boise had a light rail system, would we use it to visit family and run errands in Meridian, Nampa and Caldwell? You bet!

Senator Crapo, please be a leader who does not ask citizens to wallow in anger and pity. Establish your leadership and vision around responsible use and investment in the future!

Best regards,

KIMBERLY, Boise.

Dear Mr. Crapo: Thank you so much for trying to fight this battle for us. I do not think there is a family in the U.S. that is not being affected by our high fuel costs. For many of us, we have long considered our fuel as a necessity but with the prices we now are paying, it is becoming a luxury!

My husband and I are getting close to retirement, so we have been trying to plan and save for that time. With these fuel charges, I will have to reduce my 401K payments because I drive 25 miles to work each day. Sure, I could try and buy a smaller car to reduce my fuel bill, but my car is fairly new and paid for and it does not seem economically feasible to trade it in and start making payments on a smaller car.

No, we won't go without food or shelter, but we will be tightening our belts on other aspects of our lives. Our Saturday drives, date nights, and trips to visit our grandkids will be greatly reduced. These are the things that we have worked hard to achieve and enjoy and now will not be able to do so.

I greatly encourage our country to begin using our own resources. Domestic drilling and refining is the answer. Sure, I care about the environment and harming wildlife, but I care more about the human aspect of this crisis. Our human way life has become harmed. Why aren't the environmentalists worrying about that? With technology what it is today, there are fewer chances of oil spills or environmental issues. I also know that, with our technology, it will not take eight to ten years to get this oil into production. I think we need to begin drilling in ANWR and off the coast of California immediately.

As a citizen I will do my part to help with energy conservation but I also expect our legislatures to step up and do their part and stop being controlled by special interest environmentalists.

Thank you once again for your efforts.

JEANNETTE, Idaho Falls.

As seniors on a pension and Social Security, I think we are among the hardest hit. I think it is criminal that neither energy nor food is included in the COLA. It is going to be a long time before these prices come down and I think it is time the COLA is based on something a little more realistic. We cannot live without either one of these items. Also living in rural Idaho, we do not have any public transportation. I truly think the government would just as soon that we would all die off so they do not have to deal with us.

DONNA.

Dear Senator Mike Crapo: If you really care about one of the most crippling economic problems facing our nation, it is the impact of the greed of the oil industry infrastructure.

The racketeering (oh, well, what else should I call it?) of the oil industry is having massive inflationary impact on this nation, severely damaging this nation's transportation system. The ripple effects will be far-reaching and crippling over the long term. Damage to the transportation infrastructure with loss of service through airline cutbacks, will have long term impact on the entire travel industry, in turn impacting the entire economy. Fewer flights and fewer airline routes (and bankrupt carriers) require less

airplanes, impacting aircraft production (loss of airplane orders and jobs at Boeing), resulting in fewer jobs, and fewer hours worked. Resultant higher ticket prices make discretionary travel (vacations) less affordable impacting hotels, motels, theme parks, rental cars, etc. Look further still and it not hard to visualize the massive ripple: less hotel and motel supplies purchased, restaurant food, new automobiles for the rental car industry, etc.

The airline industry, trucking, farming, plastics (and other products reliant on petrochemicals) and food production are all suffering from the unchecked corporate oil industry greed. Greed that only promises to worsen, as the oil industry blackmails us with obvious threat of higher prices without access to protected areas for drilling. Yet they actually do nothing too relieve the bottlenecks nor improve their existing production infrastructure. Nor is it a short term solution. They claim investment, in what, additional tracts of land to grow their holdings, and exploration, to lock in future production, but provide no meaningful major expenditure that has improved current production that is of benefit to the American consumer. When was the last new refinery opened, or the old existing infrastructure modernized, unless required by regulation, or replacement due to industrial accident or breakdown? The number of competitors has shrunk thru buyouts and mergers over the years, serving to destroy the competitive market, and pricing at the pump, is nothing short of collusion, thinly veiled as competitive free market pricing. And the oil industry gets wiser on how to game the congress and the people. And you sit still for it!

We need very badly the long term solutions you speak of, however, we need action now with a high priority placed on bringing a cessation to the greed based damage to this nation's economy and the severe economic burden being endured by the voters you elected officials collectively represent.

If it is bad now, think of the winter heating bill citizens in the nation's cold climate will shortly face when winter is once again upon us.

So vital is this industry to our nation's economy, it is past time to regulate it! I repeat, it is past time to regulate the oil industry!

Our government regulates electricity, natural gas, and telephone infrastructure, and the FCC TV & radio. How is the oil industry any different? How is the oil dependency/infrastructure of this nation less vital? They are no longer serving this nation's interest in a responsible manner, have made a complete mockery of congressional investigations (with the aid of some members of congress), and basically have the United States of America over a barrel!

A good place to start would be to make speculation illegal (dealing through third party brokers & traders illegal. If a person/company does not actually physically handle the actual product, it should be made illegal to profit from it by brokering or speculation.).

How many airlines have to fold, how many truckers go under, and how much unnecessary inflation must this nation endure before our elected (for now) officials really do something meaningful? It is said oil is higher due to the shrinking dollar. Oil has driven the dollar down and is a major player in our current inflation. It impacts the United States, it ripples thru the world.

Have you asked yourselves why the voters think less of our elected officials (per polls) than our President? Are you really happy with that?

Your email implies you care. Then prove it to the voters you represent. Start the Congress on a path to put control and regulation

on [the oil] industry so very vital to the nation's economy and infrastructure.

How long must we wait for Congress to stop the ongoing damage to our dollar, cost of living (including food), and our transportation infrastructure? What could be more important to both the short-term and long-term wellbeing of this country and its citizens in your list of priorities?

On another but still related issue, where is this nation's long range planning? If I might cite an example; Japan after WWII as a nation set its sights on consumer electronics and the automobile. Look where they are today with those technologies and look at our once proud auto industry, now a cripple. Kennedy pointed this nation toward the moon—within ten years. It was a national plan and a priority. What are this nation's long-term goals? Do you know? Why do not we the people know?

These items should rise above petty politics. They should be without party ownership and bickering. And a declaration of persona non grata made toward the oil lobby and their bought and paid for elected officials.

Thank you for asking for my story, but it is really a much larger story than my story; it is our story.

JOHN.

Dear Senator Crapo: It is good to hear from you and know that at least one politician in Washington has their head on straight. Thank you for representing those of us who do not buy the "man-caused global warming" hoax. I believe it is a natural cycle the earth has gone thru many times before and will continue to undergo.

I believe all Americans want clean air, water and a healthy environment which can all be accomplished while simultaneously drilling in ANWAR, off coast regions and exploring other natural resources available domestically.

Sincerely,

MIKE, Emmett.

Dear Senator Crapo: Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on what I think is the most important issue we should have faced at least twenty years ago. Yet, I know that mustering the political will to make the changes we needed to make would have been very difficult then. Nonetheless, here we are in 2008 and, being Americans, we will face this crisis with intelligence and determination.

Frankly, I put the rising prices into this perspective. I drive a Hyundai Accent and average about 34 mpg and drive about 11,000 miles per year. So, I buy about 325 gallons annually. Gasoline has increased \$1.75 over the last short while. So, on average I'm paying an additional \$47 per month. Sure, I'd rather spend that on something else, but that really is not that bad. My wife drives our Toyota 4 Runner. Her commute is short and other than that, we only use that vehicle for recreation . . . about 4,000 to 5,000 miles per year. Again, I can live with it.

To my way of thinking, the increased gas prices have been a blessing. It has finally brought the discussion of energy management to forefront where it has needed to be for some time. Not only is our economic well being at stake, but the security of America as well. Were it not for oil, would we have ever even heard of Saddam Hussein? And, too, we are finally coming to agreement that climate change is real and are showing signs that we may actually address it. If higher gas prices are the cost of getting to have this discussion, so be it.

What should we do about gas prices, you ask? Nothing. Market forces will bring down gas consumption which should have a moder-

ating effect on prices. People are opting for more fuel efficient cars which may stimulate the auto industry. And finally, I think the federal government should take a more active role with our currency issues to keep the dollar from falling much further. I know there is reluctance to that idea, but the circumstances seem to warrant it.

Regards,

PETE, Boise.

Dear Senator Crapo: I do not agree with your assessment regarding the high price of gas. We are being gouged by the oil companies, and I will prove my point.

Oil is at about \$130 a barrel. There are 42 gallons in a US barrel, which equates to \$3.09 a gallon for crude. Add to this the price for refining say \$0.40 distribution \$0.25. State and federal Taxes and about \$0.25 a gallon a gas station makes and you will see that we are already over \$4 a gallon.

How do the oil companies make these massive profits every quarter? In the United States, we have to import 40% of our oil the other 60% comes from Alaska, Texas, California, the Gulf, etc. Are we paying \$130 a barrel to the oil companies for oil coming out of our own back yard? You people blame China and India for the cost of fuel today. For your information, I have been to both countries. They do not have the amount of cars we Americans have. In fact, they are a bicycle society.

I am fed up with Congress and the Senate for not taking any action on this issue; in fact, President Bush is quiet on the subject.

I have always been [conservative], but I fear that this coming election [conservatives will not fare well], mainly due oil prices which has a ripple effect and cause unemployment, rise in food prices etc. The hardest hit people in our society are the old people of which I am one.

Sincerely,

GEORGE.

Our current monthly gas budget has almost tripled with the increase during the past year. With my husband working out of town (300+ miles weekly commute) and I'm working for a non-profit that reimburses me @\$40/mile, we are going in the hole. As our state representative, you and your family should be feeling the same affects of the energy prices that we are, and helping correct this problem. Are you?

Respectfully,

MARCIA.

Dear Senator: I am a hard-working Idahoan who has to change my behavior because of high energy costs, but I also understand that sometimes you have to pay the piper. Nobody likes to go on a diet or take medicine. Yet in order to get well, we have to do things we do not like. This is one of those times. The answer to our energy problem is not to find some way to ignore or go around what made us fat and sick. And, I mean that quite literally. Furthermore, you know as well as I do that local oil will be the same price as global oil. The market price is the price regardless of where it comes from. You do no favor to the public with this tactic. Feel free to quote me.

JIM.

We are unable to see our children who live 500 to 1000 miles away due to gas prices. We are getting older and live on retirement income, thus we are unable to help them out with gas for making a trip to Idaho. I expect we will never get to see them again.

ROBERT and PEGGY, Emmett.

Senator Crapo for the last three years, I have been traveling to Missoula, Montana,

for medical treatments for cancer and I had a stint placed. I was traveling every three weeks for treatments and I am happy to say that the cancer is in remission as of now but Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma cannot be cured, it can be treated usually but not cured, and it keeps coming back. I am not only faced with expenses at the Cancer Center and doctor, but I have a diseased liver and they have no idea why the tests are showing such high levels in the tests. It seems all of this has hit more or less all at once in traveling and taking the tests. I have to stay overnight at times, and this, of course, creates more expenses which the government or the insurance and Medicare does not cover. My nest egg for retirement is getting eaten up each month, and it will run out. I worry about my wife if something happens to me.

I hope that someone reads this that can help me and others in the same boat. Thank you for giving me this chance to air my concerns about my health and what all it is taking to handle the situation so far.

Sincerely

GEORGE, Salmon.

OBJECTION TO THE NOMINATION OF HUSEIN CUMBER

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I stand today to object to any unanimous consent agreement in connection with the nomination of Mr. Husein Cumber to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board, or STB. I don't take this action lightly, and I would like to take a few moments to briefly describe why I am placing a hold on his nomination.

Railroads and transportation infrastructure are the lifeblood of our economy. My home State of Oregon has recently been the victim of a short line railroad that has subverted consumer protections established by Congress in an attempt to reduce service and raise rates. The STB is the last line of defense against companies that are more interested in maximizing profits than they are in their legal obligations as a common carrier.

To be an effective safeguard against this activity, the STB needs board members with in-depth experience and knowledge of a broad range of rate, service and railroad merger issues. The law says that members of the STB should possess professional standing and demonstrated knowledge in the fields of transportation or transportation regulation. I am very concerned that Mr. Cumber doesn't possess any of these qualities.

Mr. Cumber's nomination requires this body to seriously review his record of accomplishment in light of these requirements and demonstrated abilities. I have compared Mr. Cumber's record with those of other current and former members of the STB, and I would like to share some of my findings with you today.

First, Chairman Charles Nottingham, a licensed attorney. Chairman Nottingham has 4 years of experience in the Federal Highway Administration working on everything from funding analysis to policy development. He has an additional 4 years at the state level as the Transportation Commissioner and CEO of Virginia DOT. He was the counsel to the Committee on Government